are forbidden to mistreat their prisoners. This policy is confirmed in the debriefings of ARVN officers and men who have been captured and released by the VC.

A powerful theme for which all VC say they fight is peace. They say their hearts are heavy over the killings and devastation to which South Vietnam is subjected. Our interviewers confronted them strongly with the challenge, "If you would cease your hostile activities, there would be peace, wouldn't there?" Many were indignant at this charge. The warmongers, in their perspective, are the "My-Diem" forces. They see themselves as the defenders of peace, but peace with freedom. The profound war-weariness they sense among the whole Vietnamese population, they believe, will erode resistance to their liberation force, so that the Americans, even if they wish to hang on, will find no local agents to fight their war. Our respondents contended that the will of the Front would remain firm until the achievement of victory.

It should be stressed that not all members of the Front share an equally strong commitment to the foregoing objectives. There are soldiers in the Front, just as in any army, who fight primarily because it is their job to fight. Some soldiers, particularly regroupees who have been professional soldiers for more than ten years, leave an impression that they came South because they were ordered to come and that they are fighting in the South because a good soldier obeys the commands of his superiors. Nevertheless, the goals just described are bound up in the revolutionary Communist ideology of the Front and are inculcated by an effective indoctrination process. Though all members of the Front have been much exposed to these ideas, those who have served the longest, or who learn the most quickly, are likely to make the VC ideology most completely their own.

IV. FORCES FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL COHESION IN THE VIET CONG

THE PARTY

The People's Revolutionary Party of South Vietnam is roughly the regional equivalent of the Lao Dong or Workers Party in the North. Membership in the two is easily convertible, and service in the Southern Party is taken into account as part of the total Party membership time used to calculate seniority in the Vietnamese Communist movement.

Party members returning from the North appear usually to become members of the PRPSVN automatically, although in some cases they may reapply for membership simply to preserve the appearance of strictly Southern leadership of the Viet Cong movement.

Party members articulate the standard Hanoi line that the Lao Dong Party in the North aims primarily at the building of socialism whereas the mission of the People's Revolutionary Party is the liberation of South Vietnam from the American imperialists and their lackeys.

The PRPSVN, in this "national liberation" stage of the revolution, directs its appeal not only to proletarian peasants and workers, but also to the "national bourgeoisie," to intellectuals and to "progressive landlords" as well. Its qualifications for entry are therefore not so rigorous as those of the Lao Dong, and its appeal emphasizes "democracy, peace, independence, and neutrality" rather than socialism and communism.

The mass "feeder" for the PRPSVN is an organization called Liberation Youth. Its purpose is to prepare youths between the ages of 18 and 25 for membership in the PRPSVN.

Our data indicate that nearly all the officers and about one-third of the troops in the main forces are Party members and that the percentage declines in lower-echelon units.

Membership in the Liberation Youth appears to comprise most of the remainder of the effectives in the main forces.

THE CADRE

A cadre appears to be anyone who has command or administrative responsibility. On the military side, this includes anyone from a squad leader on up, although some of our sources considered even an assistant squad leader to be a cadre. Most of the cadres are either members or applicants for membership in the Party of the Liberation Youth.

The VC image of the cadre, and especially the cadre who is a Party member, is a more heroic one than that encountered these days in Eastern Europe, and even China and possibly also in North Vietnam. There, a cadre is often regarded as tough and hard-working when he needs to be, but essentially opportunistic and arriviste. He gets larger food rations, has an edge over non-Party members in the competition for promotions, and often can guarantee his children better educational opportunities. In the VC, by contrast, the cadre, and especially when he is a Party member, is regarded as a dedicated person ever willing to endure hardships in return for a chance to serve the revolution. The relative youthfulness of this movement, still in a "national liberation" stage and permeated by nationalistic idealism, is of great importance here.

When the non-Party members among our interviewees were asked if they had hoped to become Party members they answered in ways that confirmed this heroic image. They usually said something like "No, I couldn't hope for membership; my 'cultural' level was too low. Party membership would only have brought me heavier responsibilities, and those I already had were difficult enough."

THE THREE-MAN ("THREE-THREE") CELLS

These are found in the military and are smaller and more intimate than the regular Party cells in civilian life. The 10-man squad breaks down into three of these "three-three" cells, but one of these cells may sometimes include four or even five men.

Such units were used earlier in the Chinese Communist army. The

most politically mature and militarily experienced man is named cell leader. But in the natural process of a unit's expansion, the two ordinary members of a cell gain experience and tend eventually to become cell leaders themselves.

Members of a "three-three" cell "consider each other as brothers," "three for one and one for three," "inseparable in work, combat and death." They sleep in the same place but apparently do not necessarily eat all their meals together nor restrict their friendships to members of the same cell. They are supposed to confide fully in each other, and most of the kiem-thao criticism and self-criticism sessions (described below) are conducted in this small cell. Cell members appear to have explicit responsibilities to each other in the event of a man's falling ill or being wounded in combat.

KIEM-THAO SESSIONS: CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM

This term, an abbreviation for "verification and discussion," applies to a variety of sessions held at echelons ranging from the "three-three" cell all the way up to the battalion. Varying considerably in subject matter, the kiem-thao sessions feature criticism and self-criticism and are held daily whenever and wherever possible except among isolated farm-production groups and units engaged in combat. But meetings are held even during military operations if conditions permit.

Kiem-thao is most frequently held at the "three-three" cell and squad levels. The platoon holds such a session usually two or more times a month and the company about once a month. In North Vietnam and some areas of the South they are even held, though infrequently, at the battalion level.

The daily meetings, coming just before the evening meal, last for a half to three-quarters of an hour, or longer when special problems warrant. They cover the following subjects, not necessarily in this order.

(1) Spirit or morale of the unit in a general sense.

(2) Internal unity and solidarity of the unit, i.e., discipline

and cooperation among members and between them and their superiors. The men are exhorted to search their hearts to see whether all sentiments of homesickness have been thoroughly rooted out.

(3) External unity or relations between the unit and the civilian population. Here the VC live by the tam cung or "three togethers": "eat with the people," "work with the people," "sleep with the people." Attitudes toward women are severely regulated as described below.

(4) Frugality. The men are urged to be careful with clothing, food and money, and are told: "We must not waste what the people have given us."

(5) Evaluation of work performed since the last meeting and an allocation of jobs for the next day (or other period).

Some political discussion is frequently included in these meetings, but systematic political study is undertaken only periodically, usually at special stages of a Front member's career, such as after his joining the movement and at various intervals thereafter, particularly as he moves up to cadre status or takes on propaganda or recruiting (civilian or military "proselytization") functions. Such regular political study classes usually are held over a period of days or even weeks. After presentation of the political text and interpretive comments by the cadre, the unit members are obliged to comment on their own and others' comprehension in the same method employed in the kiem-thao sessions.

Kiem-thao performs at least four functions with striking effectiveness:

First, it enables members of a unit to profit from each other's experiences, and lessons are drawn from both successes and failures. The Front conducts critiques before and after military actions, probing for positive and negative performance factors. The fine detail in these reports and the Front's eagerness to profit from mistakes are impressive.

Second, the kiem-thao process enables cadres to detect and cope with politically unreliable thought and attitudes in the group. Leaders of the kiem-thao sessions report to their superiors after these meetings on morale and other problems in the unit.

Third, it gets all unit members involved and participating actively in the critique. No one can sit and listen passively. Everyone must make some individual effort to comprehend and evaluate the subject under discussion and must, at the very least, express the group "line" in his own words and relate it to his own problems.

Finally, kiem-thao appears to be an effective means of reducing all kinds of psychological tensions arising in this style of life, so fraught with physical deprivation and focused so intensely on subordination of the self to the group. Our interviewees commented that it was difficult to bear a grudge against any comrade after these sessions, because open discussion of dissatisfactions and anxieties tended greatly to clear the air.

Our interviewees described a typical pattern of reactions to the kiem-thao. At first, there was personal embarrassment at being asked to express one's innermost thoughts and to criticize others and oneself. But after a while, the recruits got into the swing of the process and found it less difficult. Eventually, almost all of them said they found it instructive. Quite a number even regarded it as exhilarating. One main force's non-com reported his own reaction to the sessions, "I felt glorious. I believed I could solve all my own problems and help others to solve theirs, too."

V. FACTORS AFFECTING VIET CONG MORALE

A slogan which recurs in our interviews is that the VC "lives splendidly and dies gloriously," because he fights for a cause. Materially, of course, their life is miserable. Most of the fighting men are given one or one and a half lon of rice a day, a lon being a measure of volume the size of an ordinary condensed milk can. Many units, particularly those outside the rice-rich delta areas, must supplement the rice ration with manioc. They may also receive a small vegetable ration daily or even less frequently, and a small amount of dried fish a few times a week. In the hills of Central Vietnam and in War Zones C and D, food is in such short supply that the troops must live largely on food grown by their own production units.

The VC usually sleep in hammocks in the jungle but sometimes are quartered on villages. Rest and sleep are usually inadequate because VC units ordinarily move and fight by night. Even in training and rest periods they frequently move to a new bivouac during the night just to impress on everyone the importance of continual alertness.

The VC interviewees often cite a slogan which goes literally, "backwardness is prohibited" (cam hu-hoa), but which actually refers to the prohibition against illicit (extramarital) sexual relations. Personal indulgence is viewed as backward and counterrevolutionary because it can harm the cause. Friendly relations with local people including women are encouraged, but no romantic activity with girls is permitted unless it is honestly intended to lead to marriage and a family. VC soldiers are not allowed to flirt at all with montagnard girls.

When breaches of discipline do occur they are punished severely in accordance with the puritanical moral code of the VC. The usual penalty consists of extended criticism sessions and the assignment of the guilty man to a headquarters unit where he may spend up to three months on regular rations but relieved of duty and in complete disgrace. A stiffer punishment is to demobilize the soldier and return him in disgrace to his village, beyond the pale of further service to the National Liberation Front.

The VC help some men to find wives, if they believe they can take on family responsibilities. However, most men feel they cannot do so until the revolution is won. Here again, personal gratification is assigned a priority below that of the revolutionary cause.

The VC soldier's loyalty and emotional ties are purposely restricted as much as possible to the cause and to his unit. Numerous interviewees described their military commander as a father figure who insisted on good performance; but the political officer appeared as the "mother" figure, because he displayed an interest in personal problems and showed respect and affection for his men even if they made mistakes. He combines functions roughly analogous to those of the chaplain, supply officer, special services officer and T.I. and E. officer in our armed forces. (The lowest echelon regular political officer is the assistant company commander. In some cases, the same man acts as military commander and political officer, at least temporarily.)

In the picture of monkish solidarity which emerges here, celibacy is apparently made somewhat tolerable not only by constant exhortation but by meager food rations, strenuous physical exertion, frequent exhaustion, a daily regimen which gets the men up at 5:00 a.m. or slightly later, even when they are engaged only in food production or political or military training; and finally, the fairly high incidence of illness due to physical hardships and paucity of medical facilities. (Illness, especially malaria, is very common among men being infiltrated into South Vietnam from the North, often via Laos.)

Although living conditions are harsh, they do not appear to have lowered Front morale appreciably. In fact, morale seems to have improved over the long run. One captured returnee commented that when he had first come to the South two years before, his unit had not had enough to eat. Gradually the supply system had improved to the point where they had not only enough food but regularly received pocket money to buy such articles as soap. A Front doctor who had worked with the Hre tribesmen said that when his unit first arrived in the Central Vietnam highlands after the long infiltration trek from the North, everyone suffered from a feeling of isolation and from the limited food supply. But after the slow build-up in the hills, the units pushed forward and, their spirits

soared when, as he put it, "We could begin to see the plains below," which represented home provinces to most of them.

We found that most of the defectors we talked to had come out primarily for personal reasons rather than as a response to an attractive competitive political appeal from the GVN. Even some of the old-time Viet Minh résistants who had gone North in 1954 and returned South have defected. Our data do not enable us to give a quantitative breakdown on motives for defection, but our impression is that most of the returnee defectors were moved by three principal factors, and again, largely personal ones, occurring separately or together in the situation of any given individual.

The first factor is social class background, i.e., a family of other than proletarian or poorer peasant origin. A farm of three hectares is not large by South Vietnamese standards, so when a young man from such a farm was regrouped to North Vietnam back in 1954-1955, he tended to be shocked at the harshness of the DRV land reform campaign toward owners of plots this size. More fundamentally, a man stigmatized as a "landlord" or a rich (or even "middle") farmer was politically suspect.

The second factor is the frustration of these returnees at not being able to visit or return to their native villages after years of separation from their families. Nearly all of them believed they would soon be reunited with their people when they "volunteered" to go South, but in some cases they had spent two years in the South and still had no firm prospects of visiting their relatives. (The VC allow such visits only when the family lives in a controlled zone or at least a contested zone. In the latter case, the Front often gives a man a small security escort for the trip to his old village. Quite a number of our sources had been captured in ARVN ambushes while traveling to visit families living in contested areas.)

A third factor in returnee defections is aging and physical debilitation. The high incidence of malaria and other disease, and physical strain of prolonged guerrilla activity and the deficient diet all tend to age a man prematurely. Several times we found men in their thirties, even the early thirties, who said, "I was getting old and

still had no prospect of settling down to a family of my own." Or, some of these men tended to say, "I devoted my youth to the struggle and now I am old and worn out. I just want to return to my family and take care of it."

What about the defectors among the non-returnee Southerners, who are generally younger and have not been separated so long from their families? Here again, those whose class backgrounds are suspect appear to defect oftener. But perhaps the biggest factor is a shorter period of exposure to political indoctrination and political hardening through participation in the struggle. The results are less dedication to the cause and relatively less ability to endure the hardship and trauma of the life of a guerrilla fighter.

There is another type of defector found among the non-returnees -- a type which usually did not remain in the VC very long. This was the individual who had joined for highly personal, non-ideological reasons, such as to escape from his family or GVN authorities. Many in this category undoubtedly have stayed with the VC, become inured to hardship, and developed a regular political commitment. But we talked to a number of such defectors who, unable to bear the hardship, had decided after a few months or even sooner that this life was not for them. In this category was a 21 year-old youth who ran off to the Front because he had been ordered by the court to pay a large damage settlement arising from a motorscooter accident. Another was a well-educated girl who was recruited while feeling sick and miserable over failing her baccalaureat examination for the fourth time. Even in these situations, of course, the VC recruiters stressed nationalist appeals, which made it easier for the subjects to construe the motive for their actions as patriotism rather than an avoidance of personal responsibility.

We did find some defectors who professed to have come out for ideological reasons, such as dissatisfaction with the VC's political emphasis on collective methods and goals, but it was difficult to tell whether these people had arrived at such views while still with the VC or later, as a result of attending GVN political re-education classes. Incidentally, such political training is given to those who surrender but not to VC POWs. The GVN is very suspicious of defectors and not

entirely without reason, for the VC has on occasion sent in false "defectors" hoping to penetrate the Chieu Hoi Commissariat and other GVN organs.

Numerous cases which seemed at first glance to express some degree of ideological motivation for defection appeared on balance to reflect mainly a personal reluctance to face what seemed an indefinite exposure to hardship and danger in the VC.

In addition, there were numerous stories of a more obviously self-serving kind, calculated to win favor for the subject with the GVN and with us.

But defectors tend also to reflect a residual admiration for some or many of the values of the revolution and a certain amount of chagrin or guilt at not having been able to tolerate the rigors of revolutionary life. This attitude appears to be reinforced by their feeling that the GVN does not offer a strong and worthy political alternative to the Front.

To return to the subject of Front morale, we asked our subjects, "When was your confidence in victory greatest and when was it weakest?" The returnees often said it was weakest in 1956 because they had felt disillusioned about the postponement of the North-South reunification elections and also because that was a period of popular reaction against the excesses of the land reform program in the North. But the returnees subsequently had seen the North Vietnamese government acknowledge its fallibility in the so-called "rectification of errors" campaign. This appeared to convince them that the movement could profit from its own mistakes and it gave them even greater faith in the movement's ultimate victory.

The POWs in our sample generally indicated that they had been most confident just before their capture because VC military units had become larger, more fully manned, and better armed, and had been winning more striking victories. But they did not envision a military victory. Although their own arms had been improving in quantity and quality, they believed they would overcome the ARVN with its superior weapons and its airpower by dint of their higher morale. They said, "ARVN troops fight as mercenaries and run when the fighting gets hot. We

fight for a cause."

We asked how long they thought the war would last. Many said they thought it would be a long war, but some said, "It cannot last very much longer now." When we asked, "What do you think will be the outcome?" a frequent answer was, "The war will continue until one side becomes worn out." When we probed further, "Do you see one side getting tired yet?" the answer tended to be, "Yes, and it's not our side."

THE PROBLEM OF AIR AND ARTILLERY STRIKES ON VILLAGES

In discussing factors affecting VC morale, an important and controversial subject concerns the political effects of artillery and aerial bombardment on villages in combat areas. Our observations here are based on some data in our interview reports which deal specifically with this subject, on peasant interviewing done on earlier trips to Vietnam, and on conversations with ARVN and U.S. officers and GVN and U.S. officials.

Some VC interviewees maintain that when a village suffers artillery or aerial bombardment, it becomes a locus of hatred against the ARVN and the Americans. These VC claim that their troops generally withdraw from an area before the artillery or air strike materializes or that they have adequate shelter holes and tunnels to prevent losses to their own ranks from these strikes. They claim to reap in many areas the gratitude of the peasants for helping them or even compelling them to build shelter holes near their houses.

The VC say, "When one innocent peasant is killed, ten rise in his place; when ten are killed, one hundred will rise up. First the relatives, friends, and neighbors of the victims are outraged; then the anger spreads to neighboring villages." They further maintain that the Liberation Youth organization in the village becomes markedly more militant and widely supported by the younger people, and that after a time, recruitment into the VC military units rises commensurately.

There are three factors in this situation which ought to be touched on here.

First, the peasant is domestically immobile. If his area is

attacked, he may evacuate it temporarily, but he hates to move away from it for any length of time because he is deeply attached to his land, fruit trees, garden, and animals. It is generally very difficult to convince him that he stands to gain financially and in security by leaving his own village. The peasant's reluctance to make such moves was dramatized by the unsuccessful aspects of the agroville and strategic hamlet programs.

Second, peasants lack the financial means to go to "safer" areas under GVN control. Most, if not all, of them who could afford to move to district or provincial towns made such moves long ago. (Ngo Dinh Nhu used to rail at these people for taking the easy way out of a dangerous situation.) Those who move to the towns may have to obtain new identification documents, and this often requires considerable time and expensive "pay-offs" to local officials. Not only is it difficult to leave a region under tight VC control but once out a person must usually "rally" (go through the formality of turning himself in). Then he may well find himself sitting in a Chieu Hoi camp for a period of anywhere from several weeks to a couple of years before government authorities decide what to do with him.

Third, artillery and air attacks on villages, as those in "free bombing zones," are not made in a political vacuum. The VC is on the spot, ready to exploit the damage and casualties for its own purposes. The ARVN, on the other hand, may appear briefly in a sweep operation, but only seldom these days do GVN authorities enter the area on a long-term pacification mission with a real capability of explaining the attack, launching reconstruction efforts, and establishing security on a systematic basis. And such follow-up activities are not undertaken at all in the "free bombing zones."

These are only preliminary remarks on a topic of the utmost importance with respect to the conduct of the war in South Vietnam. The available data do not permit firm conclusions. The second phase of the RAND VC motivation study will deal with these questions in much greater detail.

VI. THE VIET CONG'S UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNIST DOCTRINE

A sharp distinction must be drawn here between returnees and other VC because the former have been given long-term, systematic Communist indoctrination during their sojourn in the North. Most of the lower-echelon Southerners look simply to "democracy, peace, independence, and neutrality." Would socialism and communism inevitably follow a neutralist stage? They replied that they did not know just what would follow a coalition government embracing the Liberation Front and national elements, but that its form would be determined by the "aspirations of the people." Religious organizations and religious freedom would in no way be threatened by these developments. This was the reply of even the most well-indoctrinated Communists who asserted that their own religious faith, if they ever had one, had been supplanted by the dialectical materialist view that religion is merely superstition. In fact, this assurance concerning religious tolerance was voiced by these hard-core subjects so consistently and carefully as to sound like a rote answer.

The behind-the-scenes direction and manipulation of the revolutionary movement by the Party was evident to our sources in varying degrees, but this did not arouse their suspicion. On the contrary, most of them seemed to feel that this was a fitting and natural trait of the higher authority they had been indoctrinated to accept. Indeed, the secretive and conspiratorial aspects appeared to them to be manifestations of the political sagacity and tactical shrewdness of their leadership.

All the VC interviewed wore a high gloss of nationalist idealism over whatever degree of Communist ideology they had absorbed. Indeed, the central political theme of this movement, one which the VC preach convincingly to their supporters and the people generally, is that it is a revolution by, and for Southerners, with only some welcome assistance from Hanoi.

Our interviewees reflected varying degrees of comprehension of the role of North Vietnam in the Southern war or, in some cases, varying degrees of willingness to acknowledge the dimensions of Hanoi's

role. When we asked, "Could Hanoi order a cease-fire in the South?" practically all the Southerners and a number of returnees answered firmly, "No, that is a decision the Liberation Front would have to make." And then the better indoctrinated sources added, "after consultation with Hanoi." But those returnees who were Party members and had served in regular PAVN units in the North tended to acknowledge that Hanoi had more authority than this in the direction of the movement. All of our interviewees, however, appeared to be strongly imbued with the precept that North and South were only component sections of the one nation of Vietnam and that regional suspiciousness or antagonism, as by Southerners or Northerners, was counterrevolutionary and puerile.

Some returnees had a fairly sophisticated understanding of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, but most non-returnees did not. To the latter, though, "socialism" appeared to be a good word. (Incidentally, it has a favorable connotation for a great many other Vietnamese one meets in South Vietnam, including intellectuals and government officials.) "Communism" was not a bad word to these non-returnee VC, but many claimed in the interviews that they had not received enough political training to be able to discuss it in detail.

The attitude of our sources toward international politics was one of identification with the "socialist bloc," but in this they saw the Vietnamese relation to the bloc as important mainly for what it brought in the form of political succour and various kinds of aid. They did not seem to think much about it in terms of Vietnamese obligations to the bloc, present or future. Some of the better-indoctrinated tended to express their analysis of ultimate bloc victory in pragmatic terms. One returnee, for example said, "I was shown that before 1918 there were no Communist countries; now there are 13. And among the big number of neutralist countries there is a steady trend toward the Communist bloc. So it is clear that as time goes on, the Communist bloc will come to be much more powerful than the capitalist bloc, which is not unified anyway inasmuch as nations like France are challenging U.S. policy so strongly."

Concerning the Sino-Soviet split, a majority of our sources knew

something, although the non-returnees' perception of it was usually vague. Some of them claimed to believe the rift was really just a ruse to deceive the capitalist bloc. In general, the better informed or indoctrinated sources regarded the split as a not very serious argument over means to achieve common aims, and they did not admit to any belief that bloc unity was seriously impaired.

With some subjects we discussed more specific implications of the dispute, including reported cuts in Soviet aid to Hanoi, the preponderance of Chinese aid, and the resultant greater political leverage that this gave to the Chinese. A few were aware of reports that Soviet aid had been reduced, but such information did not budge them from the conviction that there was an underlying identity of purpose within the Communist bloc and that the DRV was capable of eventually restoring friendly and traditional relations with the USSR. Although the returnees minimized the effects of the split on North and South Vietnam, some, when pressed hard, acknowledged that it could possibly slow down the revolution in the South.

These interviewees refused positively to see any plausibility in the suggestion that the Chinese Communists might try to take advantage of the situation created by their aid to North Vietnam for purposes of tightening their political control over the DRV. To these sources, the Communist Chinese could be trusted because they had nothing politically in common with the "old, feudalistic Chinese" of the Chiang Kai-shek era. Hanoi was capable of looking after its own interests vis-a-vis the Chinese, these men believed. It would not take any action which could harm the cause of the Southern revolution, which, after all, they repeated, was a revolution of and for Southerners.

Even so, there were some indications in the interviews that the Front is fearful of a large-scale Chinese involvement in their struggle. It may even want to minimize people's awareness of such Chinese participation as already prevails. There were no strong signs of this, but the evidence, such as it is, includes the following kinds. A carbine of originally Russian design and later taken as a model for manufacture in Chinese arsenals in Manchuria is now being distributed to many VC units. It is marked only with a triangle and a number, not with Chinese

characters. It is popularly described in VC propaganda tracts as the "red-stock rifle," the "Russian rifle" or the "Czech rifle," but almost never as of Chinese origin. (Even the GVN usually refers to it as a "Russian rifle.")

At least one of our subjects reported that when weapons were distributed to his unit and questions were asked about their source, the cadre gave an evasive answer. The cadre himself may not have know the source, but in any case the VC appeared to regard this as a sensitive subject. Again, porters carrying weapons and supplies down the trails from North Vietnam to the VC were strictly forbidden to ask about the contents of their loads. Sometimes, however, the packages broke open or the porters even opened them out of curiosity and found materiel and medical supplies with Chinese markings.

The careful indoctrination reflected in our sources' responses concerning the actual or potential role of the Chinese in the Vietnamese revolution indicates also a strong concern lest the ancient Vietnamese fear of Chinese domination impair the revolutionary effort. That old fear traditionally has been much stronger among the Northern than the Southern Vietnamese, but the GVN's propaganda about the Hanoi regime's being a lackey of the Chinese has probably helped somewhat to implant that suspicion among some of the Southerners.

VII. QUESTIONS RAISED AND ANSWERED DURING BRIEFINGS

A number of questions were asked after each of the fifteen sessions at which the preceding briefing was given. Since they added depth to our presentation we reproduce them below together with the tentative answers possible at this stage in the analysis of the collected data. Some of the questions were asked repeatedly and our oral answers may have varied slightly, depending on the context in which they occurred.

Question: What are the VC's reactions to being interviewed by Americans? Does this experience tend to stimulate or inhibit their frankness of responses?

Answer: We had initial apprehensions about this, and so did Vietnamese and U.S. officials. But we were able to establish sufficient rapport with a good percentage of our interviewees to get them to talk to us about their VC experience and an even closer rapport with a certain percentage of them. The well-indoctrinated among them were reluctant to divulge information they thought could harm the VC cause, but their perceptions of what constituted this damaging type varied a good deal. They responded quite readily to numerous questions about factors that had affected their morale, for example, and also to questions concerning the effectiveness of their techniques of political indoctrination. But they were trained in the movement to preserve secrecy concerning their activities according to a policy of "compartmentalization of function" (phuong-cham ngan-cach) based on "need to know."

Our sources reacted to us (and our Vietnamese interviewers) in a more relaxed manner once they found that we were not interested in tactical information, which they feared could be exploited to the immediate detriment of their old unit and comrades in arms, such as names of comrades, unit weapons, etc. (Many GVN reports stressed such information in minute but apparently useless detail, useless because the names of VC riflemen, for example, could not be sent out anyhow to local security services capable of arresting these men or even to

military units with a capability of rounding them up.)

We usually introduced ourselves as sociology professors studying social conditions in GVN and VC areas and the behavior of men under the stress of revolutionary war. We tried to convince them that we were interested in them in this sense rather than as individual security cases, and that we could treat any information they gave us as confidential so that it could neither help nor harm them in the eyes of GVN security agencies. (For carrying out this pledge a confidential code was devised to designate the interviewee and place of interview by symbols on the interview reports later distributed in Vietnam.) We addressed them respectfully and during the interviews offered them cigarettes, soft drinks, and sometimes beer, fruit and other foods. A considerable number of subjects would not take our cigarettes for the first hour or so, but even the most hostile usually did eventually.

Our better sources enjoyed the interviews to some extent because they were afforded an opportunity to talk about their revolutionary aspirations and relive their VC experiences verbally, in marked contrast to their prison regime, which forbids prisoners to talk about politics and usually limits the number of men who can talk together about anything, as described earlier. In some cases our sources regarded the termination of the interview series with real regret because they had had a chance not only to express their ideas, but to get us to debate these ideas with them and try to answer some of their questions about the U.S. presence in Vietnam. A few appeared grateful for new insights regarding their own situation as viewed by an outsider.

The most hostile of our interviewees usually were those in the "suspect" category, persons from whom the GVN had been unable to elicit confessions of VC activity and concerning whom it lacked hard evidence of such activity. (Incidentally, this large group of suspects appeared to include many men and women who had not served the VC or had done so in only very marginal ways. Some of them claimed convincingly that they had been forced to sign false confessions of VC activity.) But even the most hostile suspects did not manifest their antagonism to us in ways more combative than non-communicativeness or occasional sarcasm. A principal reason for this may have been their fear of harsh punishment

by prison officials for such behavior. But a more fundamental reason appeared to be their general preference for dealing with the enemy by persuasion and "sweet talk" when this was possible.

We were told by Vietnamese prison officials that the hard-core VC women cadres in some of the Rehabilitation Centers were so aggressively hostile that they might have shouted or spit at us or made other attempts to embarrass us, as by trying to take off some of their clothes in our presence. We did interview some women suspects (not in the hard-core category) but never met with any such unusual reactions as these.

Question: What do your POWs know about the countries bordering on Vietnam such as Cambodia? Do they view them as a sanctuary?

Answer: We did not pursue this question in any detail but we did note that a document captured on one of our sources, a VC captain, and translated by MACV, stated that an area of Cambodia across the Vietnamese frontier could be used as a sanctuary. One VC document, perhaps that some one, stated that in the opinion of the VC writer (his identity was not disclosed), Sihanouk was unpredictable and "changed his mind too often."

Question: How do the VC feel about the use of a foreign territory such as Laos? Were they at all bothered by passing through Laos on their way from North Vietnam to the South?

Answer: Quite a number of infiltrators passed through Laos enroute to South Vietnam and knew they were in Laos. Usually they were told so and issued a small amount of Lao currency for miscellaneous expenses during the trip. The march discipline was such, however, that these VC troops had little contact with local peoples during the trip South or even their local guides -- they were not even authorized to ask them their names. One or more of our sources had spent three months or more as a combat soldier in Laos before being sent on down to South Vietnam. Our data indicate that the VC who passed through Laos did so as a matter of course, after the need for such an itinerary had been explained to them by their commanders.

Question: Do the VC give their men any guidance on what they should or should not tell enemy interrogators if captured? Is there

a VC vulnerability here which could be exploited by the GVN?

Answer: The VC tell their men only that they are likely to be tortured and killed by the ARVN if they are captured. There is no code impressed on them, such as "tell only your name, rank and serial number." The result of this is that captives expect the worst. Again, the GVN could probably reduce VC fear of capture, obtain more defections, and induce greater VC disillusionment with their own political propaganda if it treated POWs more humanely so that their post-capture experience contrasted more sharply with the picture of social degeneracy they have been indoctrinated to expect.

It is conceivable that the GVN could exploit this situation in very specific ways. If POW treatment were improved, the GVN could possibly use officers and cadres among its VC defectors and POWs to persuade other POWs to cooperate with the ARVN by such means as divulging more accurate information more quickly. (Many defectors are disappointed that they have not been used by the GVN in more attempts to induce defections, as described elsewhere in this report.)

Question: Is there any evidence that the Front stresses the "good life" in North Vietnam for recruitment purposes?

Answer: A version of this appeal was used effectively with the Viet Minh *résistants* who went North in 1954-1955: "Come North! You see another part of the country and aid in socialist reconstruction. It will not be for long -- you will return after two years to a South at peace."

It is clear that quite a number of VC POWs have come to know something about life in the North and other "socialist" countries and to admire it. But this view is probably developed in them after their entry into the VC instead of serving as a recruiting appeal in the first stages of their involvement with the organization.

Question: Did the POWs have any heroes or did they discuss any leaders by name, such as VC generals, Ho Chi Minh or members of the DRV Politburo in Hanoi?

Answer: Ho Chi Minh appears to be a hero to anyone with any political background at all. The Southerners with relatively little time in the movement are very vague on other DRV leaders but may know some

of the most famous, such as Vo Nguyen Giap and Pham Van Dong. The returnees from North Vietnam are better versed in the names of the leaders, but when we pressed a few of our better indoctrinated sources for more detailed lists of names of Politburo members, we rarely got more than four or five names.

These interviews give the strong impression that the VC are not bound together by dedication to a galaxy of national heroes. Their allegiance is rather to a revolutionary cause led by those men.

Question: What do the VC know about the American aid program, and what are their reactions to it?

Answer: Among other questions, we asked them if they had seen the clasped hands symbol of the aid program, and they generally responded that they had seen it on such things as the vehicles of GVN officials and on goods for sale in the stores. They didn't understand the commercial import program which had brought in these goods, and many wondered why the goods were considered a form of economic aid when the people had to pay for them in the stores.

Those interviewees who had some grounding in Communist doctrine regarded these consumer goods bearing the clasped hands symbol as evidence of a U.S. intention to expand its market in Vietnam by developing a taste among the Vietnamese for American products.

Many others remarked that the most obvious forms of U.S. aid they saw in Vietnam were airplanes, M113 armored personnel carriers, artillery, and other weapons.

In political terms, the VC saw the U.S. aid program as a means of buying off and manipulating its lackey, the GVN, to do its bidding and so keep up the war against the Front. Another aspect of this VC viewpoint is that the Americans are a shrewder and more formidable enemy than were the French. Americans are thought to be shrewder because by manipulating the GVN, they have been able to get Vietnamese to do most of the actual fighting and to take most of the casualties. And they are considered to be more formidable precisely because of this as well as because of the power of American industrial and military technology. (This VC evaluation of American shrewdness contrasts with the usual non-Communist Vietnamese view that the French were more sophisticated

and shrewd in their dealings with the Vietnamese than the Americans, who have had a comparatively short experience in the country.)

Question: What impact did GVN reconstruction programs have on the villages of these VC?

Answer: There was a great variance in the extent to which these programs reached down into the villages of our interviewees. In some cases, they reported very little in the way of reconstruction programs, perhaps only a simple log bridge or two. In others, a village school and road and permanent bridges were built. The most widely found and most appreciated type of GVN aid appears to have been the agricultural credit (NACO) program. Quite a number of our sources reported that their fathers or in some cases they themselves had received some of the smaller loans under this program, i.e., one thousand to about three or four thousand piasters. There are very few instances in our sample of families that had benefited from the GVN's land reform program, either by the improvement of rental contract provisions or by the acquisition of land.

Even in a village that had received NACO farm loans and other aid, however, the VC, after a certain length of time, were very frequently able to exploit some fund of local resentment, develop it into hatred, and use this in combination with other means to turn the village against the GVN.

Question: Do you see important differences or similarities between the Chinese and Vietnamese Communists with regard to tactics and indoctrination and control techniques?

Answer: There are striking similarities in Chinese and Vietnamese methods of building loyalty, cohesion and morale in the armed forces. The Chinese introduced such techniques as the criticism sessions and the "three-three" cells in the squads in 1946 or earlier when the Eighth Route Army was relying on creative, imaginative methods in its campaigns against the Chinese Nationalists. (Alexander L. George and Herbert Goldhamer of RAND have studied these techniques by interrogation of Chinese Communist POWs in Korea.*) One aspect of these

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*Alexander L. George, Political Organization and Morale in the Chinese Communist Forces (U), RM-902, The RAND Corporation, July 1952, Confidential.

processes which is striking in both the Chinese and Vietnamese cases is the extent of egalitarianism and fraternity in the armed forces and their impact particularly on a man who has served earlier in the more traditional armed forces of the Chinese Nationalists or, in Vietnam, the ARVN.

The recruits are impressed by the lack of insignia on officers' and non-coms' uniforms and the fact that the officers live under the same hardships in the field as do the men. When the VC are asked if the officers in the South get favorable treatment, such as better food, they reply that the only apparent advantage is that officers do not stand guard at night. But all of them perceive that the officers' overall security and other operational responsibilities more than outweigh a chore like guard duty.

Peasants in the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist armed forces are impressed and flattered to a certain extent by the realization that the cadres "care so much about what I personally think" and take such pains to discuss political and military problems with the men and draw out their own reactions. The Chinese and Vietnamese Communist cadres possibly read their men into the tactical picture even more fully than is done in the U.S. Army and this makes for much greater effectiveness in their operations. It is clear that the Vietnamese kiem thao or criticism sessions described in this report do generate initiative and imaginative approaches to problem situations.

One obvious innovation in Communist armies generally which again impresses particularly those who have served earlier in traditionally oriented armies, such as those of the Chinese Nationalists or the ARVN, is the new disciplinary emphasis on persuasion and indoctrination rather than blunt authoritarianism including corporal punishment. ARVN soldiers are slapped and beaten, particularly by their non-coms, and some of the VC in our sample who had observed such incidents expressed shock at these methods, not only because they affront human dignity but mainly because the VC consider them ineffective when compared with their own methods.

The Chinese political control system as exemplified by the critiques in the squads and "three-three" cells evidently involved more

voluntarism in the earlier period of the Eighth Route Army than it did later in the Korean War. This was so because the latter campaign involved the absorption of many ex-Chinese Nationalist troops considered politically unreliable and therefore believed to require more forceful surveillance and indoctrination. Dr. George found that the ChiCom criticism sessions in Korea showed a good deal of what might be called "critiquemanship" or nominal participation just to "get by." We have found some of this in the VC in statements of occasional sources claiming they did not like to participate very much in these sessions except to criticize someone else who clearly had infringed on the rule that criticism must be offered in an objective spirit devoid of vengefulness and spite. Generally, though, the VC problem of integrating ex-enemy troops into its own units is not comparable in difficulty to that experienced by the Chinese Communists who absorbed whole armies of ex-Nationalists. The VC are able to use more voluntaristic criticism techniques with great effectiveness.

Professor H. Franz Schurmann of the University of California, Berkeley, has noted the remarkable ability of Chinese Communist military units during the campaigns against the Nationalist forces to maintain discipline and adherence to overall strategic and tactical plans among units, including small units, deployed at some distance from headquarters and operating under conditions of considerable autonomy. They were able to avoid tendencies toward excessive autonomy or "mountain-topism," as they called it, that might injure tactical coordination among these units.

Our observations lead us to wonder whether the VC may not outperform the Chinese in this respect because of their ability to operate separately in small units, under great hardship, and still coordinate their efforts in larger, overall tactical and strategic schemes.

Question: Do the VC have land programs of their own in South Vietnam?

Answer: They have instituted some land distribution based on the principle that any family possessing more land than it needs to feed its own members should allow landless peasants to use the remainder. Several of our interviewees have said the VC made such land available to them or in their absence to their wives while they were

assigned to VC military units elsewhere. They claimed the VC left it up to the landlords to decide if they wanted to participate in this program and that some landlords had not. As yet, they had not suffered any punishment for not sharing their land.

Question: How do the VC justify the use of terrorism such as assassinating village officials and laying mines under roads to blow up buses carrying civilians?

Answer: We probed for attitudes on this more strongly in the last phase of our research. We found that assassinations of local officials tended to be regarded as political actions which could bring negative as well as positive results. A defector recalled that the VC had killed two popular officials in his village and in so doing had deeply offended the local populace. This, said our source, represented a political "defeat for the VC." A year later the VC assassinated another official, this time one who was intensely disliked. According to this source, the peasants generally regarded the negative results of the first incident as having been canceled out by the positive results of the second.

In the Viet Minh period and in the early days of the Viet Cong there was considerable emphasis on terror. But as the movement has strengthened and gained in the control of more regular forms of administrative and police power in the countryside, it has tended to exercise its authority in more conventional ways. Our sources generally believed that such drastic action as assassination was taken only after persuasion, indoctrination and less violent means of intimidation had first been tried and ruled out as impracticable. They contended that in the more recent period, the VC have always tried first to talk personally with and attempt to persuade a local official to desist from his counterrevolutionary activities. If he remains intransigent, the VC attempt to warn him several times through agents in face-to-face meetings or, if these are too risky, by written message. Then, if he still refuses to cooperate, the VC may try to abduct him and subject him to political indoctrination. If this is unfeasible, alternatives such as assassination will be considered.

Concerning terrorism against innocent civilians such as the

blowing up of buses, we found that numerous sources claimed to know nothing. Some civilian cadres who admitted to some familiarity with such incidents said they had had no contact with the perpetrators because military units were responsible for such tasks as mining roads and special units carried out such assignments as planting explosive charges and throwing grenades in theaters and bars. When we did get some of our interviewees to talk about this type of activity, they indicated, if only indirectly, their acceptance of the notion that in a revolutionary war the side that is militarily weaker has to use such tactics sometimes. They still insisted, however, that terrorism was politically dangerous because it could so easily alienate rather than win over people suffering in any way from it.

One source, an assistant platoon leader in the main forces, said that the killing of innocent civilians was politically counterproductive and that it happened usually by accident. Sometimes, for example, through faulty intelligence a VC unit might believe that a given busload of people contained GVN officials or ARVN personnel in mufti. Or, he said, VC local cadres might act rashly and overzealously in ordering sabotage actions. In such cases, they would be criticized and disciplined by their superiors.

He said that if a bus carried a proportion of, say, 20 ARVN or GVN personnel to two or three innocent persons, the VC might decide reluctantly to sacrifice them in the interests of the many other people who would thereby be spared future suffering and exploitation at the hands of the GVN officials. But if it did this, it would be careful to obtain the names and home addresses of the innocent individuals and would send agents to their relatives to explain its decision and try to console the survivors even if this required visits to families in a number of provinces. He indicated that the VC considered this to be a kind of involuntary self-sacrifice demanded only with great regret by the revolution.

Question: How would you evaluate the GVN's Chieu Hoi (defector) program?

Answer: Hard-core VC say they are able easily to discourage VC surrenders by exploiting the contradictions between the amnesty

publicized by the GVN and the program as it is actually carried out. They tell their men that anyone captured by or surrendering to the ARVN will be tortured and executed. Other captured VC say the Chieu Hoi leaflets dropped in their areas were attractive and appealing, but they dared not believe their promises. Still others say they would have surrendered if they could have found a propitious occasion and especially if they had known some route leading to a GVN controlled area and reasonably free of possible VC checkpoints and the risks of being shot at by VC or ARVN units.

The surrendered VC we have talked to in Chieu Hoi centers often believe that they are not trusted by the GVN and, invariably, they feel neglected. They think they should be given productive employment, at least, and returned to a more normal living situation outside the camps. Many of them are dissatisfied because the GVN does not make use of their experience by sending them into VC-controlled areas to tell their own stories to the people there and thus induce further surrenders.

Question: Do you have any idea how many more regroupees the VC still have in the North available to send South? How realistic is it to hope that if the war continues for some additional years, the gradual attrition of returnee cadres will dampen the insurgency markedly?

Answer: Our sources did not give us a consistent answer on the number of regroupees still available for sending to the South but they believed that fairly large numbers of them were still living in the North. The only regroupees who will not be sent back fall into two categories: those who are too old or not in a sufficiently vigorous physical condition to stand the trip or the rigors of the insurgency in the South; and the smaller number who have worked up into important DRV administrative and other positions and are therefore not easily replaceable.

Our judgment is that the attrition of returnee cadres through aging, physical debilitation, and military action is not likely to pose any significant leadership problem because the Southern revolution has already attained a momentum that makes it less reliant than formerly on the returnees' contributions to organization and morale.

As the nature of the war changes and more sophisticated weapons are introduced, however, technical cadres and instruction continue to be an important and continuing form of aid from the North.

Question: Why do you think the DRV is sending ethnic Northerners to the South?

Answer: We can only speculate on this, but it appears that many of the ethnic Northerners are being assigned to units in parts of Central Vietnam which do not have the population density and hence the recruiting potential of such areas as the Mekong Delta. The VC have been able to use these Northerners to advantage in the large build-up of its units in the Central Vietnam provinces, for although many men from these provinces were regrouped to the North and later infiltrated South as returnees, the build-up in the Center in recent months has been of such a magnitude as to require the extra manpower.

Question: How does the motivation of the ethnic Northerners you talked to compare with that of the Southerners?

Answer: We talked to half a dozen VC born and bred in the North and then sent South. One was an 18 year-old soda pop salesman who was sent South after only five weeks' political and military training. Another was a 23 year-old farm boy conscripted into the PAVN and given regular military training. Another was a 20 year-old farmer who had received no military training in the North but was given a week's training after arrival in the South.

The motivation of these men appeared to be less strong than that of the group having the highest motivation in our sample, namely the regroupees, or even of some of the ordinary Southerners. Some of these men had "volunteered" to come South in very perfunctory ways, e.g., their whole units had "volunteered" en masse.

Question: What kind of direct radio communication do the VC have with North Vietnam?

Answer: Units down to at least the company level have political officers who listen to Hanoi (or the "Liberation") radio stations by transistor radios and then pass on to the men some of the news and commentary. We know very little about covert communications with Hanoi. One of our interviewees was an intelligence officer charged with

transmitting reports directly to Hanoi, that is, without sending them through Front channels first. (He was captured before he could set up his transmitting equipment.)

Question: Was there any recanting among the POWs? To what extent did they criticize or show disaffection with the VC?

Answer: There was significant recanting among a small percentage of POWs who indicated they had been considering defecting before their capture. There also was recanting, of course, among the defectors. But POWs generally appeared to be confirmed in their political faith by their prison experience, as we have noted earlier. Most of the defectors had left the VC for reasons of personal inability to tolerate the hardships of guerrilla life, as discussed in this report. We detected in most of them some chagrin and guilt over this, based on an underlying acceptance that certain, if not many, fundamental tenets of the revolutionary line were correct and represented in varying degrees the "just cause."

We believe the GVN is throwing away a golden opportunity to cause many POWs to become disillusioned with VC political claims by its present policy of making the post-capture experience humiliating and inhumane rather than educative and disillusioning. As the situation stood at the time of our departure from Vietnam in December 1964, this post-capture experience tended to confirm rather than refute VC political interpretations.

Expressions of disillusionment with limited areas of VC experience is more common than outright recanting among the POWs. But it is necessary to look for self-serving motives in cases of recanting, such as those found particularly among the defectors, and even in the more limited type of griping. One of the half-dozen ethnic Northerners in our sample was a 23 year-old peasant boy who was fulfilling his regular three-year military service obligation when his unit was asked to "volunteer" to fight in the South. He had been captured in his first combat action, a small-unit skirmish, and his one complaint about his entire military experience was that after the other members of his unit had fled under ARVN fire, no one had dared to try to drag him to safety after he had been wounded. This young man was cooperating

extensively with his ARVN interrogator and gave the impression that to justify such cooperation with the former enemy he had to find something wrong with the system to which he had owed his original loyalty. His criticism of being abandoned on the field after being wounded appeared to be something of a distortion of the real situation, for as he described his capture, there appeared to have been very little chance for his comrades to do anything but save themselves from capture or death in an engagement with a larger enemy force.

Dissatisfaction with very harsh living conditions, as in the experience of some units infiltrated from the North which gradually ran short of food and were harrassed by aerial bombardment, comes through clearly in some of the interviews. But even here, when disaffection might be strong enough to induce consideration of or attempts at defection, that disaffection tends to be expressed against the particular assignement and situation of the individual rather than against the VC movement or the aims of the revolution.

A strong kind of disaffection in terms of its capability of eroding long-term Viet Minh and VC indoctrination and commitment was that expressed by a few regroupee POWs and defectors who apparently never really adjusted satisfactorily to the prolonged separation in the North from their families in the South. In some of these cases, their early and powerful disappointment at the cancellation of the 1956 elections seemed to have caused deep bitterness. Reinforced by later disappointments in their Northern experience -- which in themselves might not have contributed significantly to disaffection -- this tended to engender in them a cumulative discouragement. By and large, however, it must be pointed out here again, such periodic disappointments appear to have been dissipated very skillfully by the routine criticism sessions.

Question: Has there been increased VC recruitment recently and therefore does the Front include a higher percentage of younger, less-indoctrinated and less-educated types? Are most of the new recruits of the cannon-fodder, less-talented types?

Answer: Our data indicate that recruiting has been stepped up progressively to take in all available youths, including the talented

as well as the uneducated peasant boys. We have some 15 and 16 year-old guerrillas of the latter type in our sample.

Depth of indoctrination is achieved automatically over time. A VC possessing reasonable intelligence and energy tends to advance in rank and responsibility as he acquires experience and indoctrination. Even though recruitment has been accelerated, a man who has been in the movement for only a few months experiences a considerable impact on his thinking and by the time he has been in for a year, his motivation and commitment are deepened commensurately.

Leon Goure of RAND, in the second phase of the VC motivation study, has focused more direct attention on recent recruits and will discuss this subject more specifically in his report.

Question: What weaknesses or vulnerabilities in VC organization or operating procedures have you found which could be exploited by our side?

Answer: We have already discussed two of the most striking weaknesses: (a) the harshness of living conditions and the longing for home and family, and (b) the vulnerability which probably exists in the form of Vietnamese suspiciousness of the Chinese role in aiding the Southern revolution. Instances of looseness in organizational control that might indicate further areas for exploitation are described below. It should be noted in passing that approaches seeking to utilize these must necessarily be piecemeal and relate only tangentially to the key proposition that many more VC's would defect if they felt there was a legitimate political alternative to support. Ideally, of course, this alternative would feature the establishment of a firm political authority at the center with effective agencies reaching down into the villages. This would raise the morale of local GVN representatives and give them the programs needed to pose a visible political alternative to the VC.

A defector described one instance of a type of VC organizational looseness that might be susceptible to a more piecemeal type of exploitation. This man in his early twenties deserted a VC guerrilla unit and anticipated correctly that, returning to his village less than 15 kilometers away, he would be able to spend about a month there before

word of his desertion reached VC officials in his village. Just before the month ended he defected to the GVN. Another kind of organizational looseness is reflected in statements by several sources who reported that weeks or up to two months were required to send official messages by courier over long distances within South and Central Vietnam.

Question: Is there any evidence that the heavy casualties we are inflicting on the VC are hurting their morale seriously?

Answer: The evidence suggests that although casualties may keep a unit out of action for a certain period, they do not seem to affect significantly the VC's faith in ultimate victory. They tend to respond to this situation with the familiar statement that "the GVN has airplanes, armored personnel carriers, and better weapons, but ARVN troops fight only for pay. We will beat them because we are fighting for the just cause."

For specific reactions of the VC to the rising casualty rates we refer the reader to the report that Leon Goure is now preparing on the second phase of this study, for it will deal more directly with this subject.